



NORTHWEST SUBURBAN MUNICIPAL JOINT ACTION WATER AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT

POSITION IN BRIEF

The Northwest Suburban Municipal Joint Action Water Agency (JAWA), a multi-jurisdictional, wholesale water distribution system in the northwest Chicago area, seeks professional individuals experienced in either utility management, local government, or finance to be their next Executive Director. The Agency is considered a leader in water distribution systems in the Chicagoland area. The next Executive Director will be a strategist, focusing on the opportunities for advancement, efficiency and security of the water operations and supply. Position is appointed by and reports to the Executive Committee composed of the seven Village Managers of the member communities. The financially secure agency has 14 full-time employees, who provide 24-hour facility support, and three part-time employees serving a current customer base of seven wholesale municipal customers, with a combined daytime population of more than 500,000 and a proposed FY 2022 budget of approximately \$63 million.



JAWA GOVERNANCE

JAWA is governed by a Board of Directors that consists of one elected official from each member municipality. Each Director has an equal vote. The officers of the Agency are appointed by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors meets quarterly in the evening.

The Board of Directors determines the general policies of the Agency, makes all appropriations, approves contracts for sale or purchase of water, adopts resolutions providing for the issuance of bonds and notes by the Agency, adopts by-laws, rules and regulations and exercises such powers and performs such duties as may be prescribed in the Agency Agreement or its By-Laws.

The operation of the Agency is conducted under the direction of the Executive Committee, subject to the general policy decisions of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee is responsible for carrying out the policy decisions of the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee consists of the Village Manager of each member community. Each member is entitled to one vote on the committee. The Executive Committee meets monthly during working hours.

The administrative and operational functions of JAWA are the responsibility of the Executive Director. The Executive Director reports to the Executive Committee and is accountable for the operation of the system in accordance with Agency policies and directions.

AGENCY MEMBERS



Village of Elk Grove Village



Village of Hanover Park



Village of Hoffman Estates



Village of Mount Prospect



City of Rolling Meadows



Village of Schaumburg



Village of Streamwood

The Northwest Suburban Municipal Joint Action Water Agency (JAWA) or “Agency” is an intergovernmental agency created under the Illinois Intergovernmental Cooperation Act. The purposes and objectives of JAWA are:

- To provide potable water to member municipalities.
- To plan, construct, acquire, develop, operate, maintain, or contract for facilities for receiving, storing, and transmitting water from Lake Michigan for member municipalities and their water users.
- To provide adequate supplies of such water on an economical and efficient basis for its members.

AGENCY MEMBERS:

Village of Elk Grove Village
Village of Hanover Park
Village of Hoffman Estates
Village of Mount Prospect

City of Rolling Meadows
Village of Schaumburg
Village of Streamwood

Shortly after JAWA was organized in 1981, the major regional water transmission system was developed, and a long-term Water Supply Agreement negotiated with the City of Chicago to secure wholesale potable water from Lake Michigan. The main pumping station went on-line December 1985 delivering Lake Michigan potable water to its members replacing the municipalities’ groundwater sources. JAWA’s current water purchase contract with the City of Chicago expires in 2032.

Today JAWA supplies treated Lake Michigan water to its seven member municipalities which are in a contiguous geographic area of approximately 81 square miles, with a total daytime population of more than 500,000. JAWA’s service area is adjacent to and northwest of O’Hare International Airport, one of the world’s busiest airports. The service area is primarily single-family residential, though there are significant industrial and commercial areas served.

The Agency was recently compelled to relocate significant portions of a large diameter (90”) watermain to accommodate construction along the Jane Addams I-90 Tollway. This very complex project was completed while providing uninterrupted water service to member communities and was a great operational success for both NSMJAWA and the ISTHA. The project was coordinated through an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Tollway, and the Agency was compelled to issue debt for this project based upon a \$73M cost ceiling threshold. As of FYE 2022, \$52M of this debt remains; the debt service will end in 2032.

JAWA has received the following recognitions:

- 1986 – Engineering Excellence Award from the Consulting Engineers Council of Illinois
- 1986 – Outstanding Regional Project from the American Public Works Association, Chicago Metropolitan Chapter
- 2000 – APWA Top Ten Project of the Century – Lake Michigan Water Supply for the Suburbs
- 2008 APWA Project of the Year Award – O’Hare 90” Watermain Hot Tap

JAWA serves approximately 100,000 water customers. In the last fiscal year, total water consumption was approximately 10 billion gallons or a daily average of approximately 30 million gallons. The Agency is currently engaged with other regional water wholesalers to consider and advance concepts for alternative water source options, while concurrently participating with the current water supplier, the City of Chicago, to develop a wholesale water rate structure.

JAWA’s main pumping station is located near the eastern boundary of O’Hare International Airport. From the delivery point, the transmission mains extend west and northwest in a 55-mile network to provide at least three service connections to each of the municipal-member’s local water system. There is reservoir capacity of approximately 30 million gallons.

AGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Executive Director for the Agency will be responsible for all administrative and executive duties for the Agency and will be supported by experienced and effective operational staff, including an Operations Manager with 25+ years' experience with the Agency, and an Administrative Assistant with nearly 10 years with the Agency. Additionally, an experienced part-time Finance Director (current interim Executive Director), is provided through the firm of Lauterbach & Amen. Professional services support includes accounting and bookkeeping services through Lauterbach & Amen, as well as professional engineering support through Burns & McDonnell. The Agency is a member of various municipal cooperative organizations including MICA (Municipal Insurance Cooperative Agency), through which loss management, risk control and liability insurance is provided, and IPBC (Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative) through which employee health insurance benefits are provided (Blue Cross Blue Shield). The Agency has a long-standing relationship with experienced legal counsel through the firm of Ancel Glink.



MAJOR INITIATIVES & CHALLENGES

The new Executive Director is expected to work closely with the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and staff on many projects including:

1. Work with the team of expert consultants to review, negotiate, and advance consideration of a cost of service-based water rate with Chicago.
2. Establish a meaningful role in the proposed Chicago water system advisory group to create a structure that provides increased governance control and rate certainty for wholesale consumers.
3. Continue advancement of water supply alternatives including the construction of a new regional system and continued engagement with potential partner agencies.
4. Ensure successful transition to new audit firm, ensure continued compliance with accounting and utility management standards and best practices.
5. Engage and provide proposals to potential new customer communities that might be served by NSMJAWA; providing support documents and engineering/financial guidance.
6. Work with staff and consultants to prepare and update the multi-year Capital Plan.
7. Facilitate completion of the Triennial Report required in accordance with bond indentures.
8. Continue employee training initiatives including work site safety, trenching and shoring, cathodic protection, and electric systems operation. Continue to provide opportunities for operator compliance with EPA continuing education credit requirements and maintain 100% Water Operator and Professional Engineering certifications.
9. Continue to enhance communication and coordinate input from member public works and finance directors.



CANDIDATE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

JAWA is seeking experienced candidates for its Executive Director. Candidates must have strong technical skills, an understanding of utility operations and management experience. The position requires well-developed leadership abilities and management skills that are based upon analytical thinking and collaborative problem solving. The Executive Director is anticipated to have a regular presence at the Main Pumping Station to ensure operational awareness and engagement with staff.



POSITION REQUIREMENTS

- Seven to ten years of local government experience serving as a public works professional with civil engineering, utility, water operations, and public works managerial experience; or a Finance professional with experience in utilities or local government; or City/Village Manager experience. An equivalent combination of education and experience is desired. Preferred certifications or education include: a Professional Engineering license; a Bachelor's Degree in civil engineering; a CPA; or, Master's Degree in Public Administration or Business.
- Have the ability to manage and supervise assigned operations and organize workloads and assign staff responsibilities. Be anticipatory in training needs.
- Possess a reputation for fairness in personnel actions and working with employees, taking into account individual employee needs while getting the work of the Agency done on a timely basis.
- Demonstrate absolute integrity and honesty in all professional interactions.
- Working knowledge of federal, state and local regulations, policies, practices, and standards used in providing water utility services. Knowledge of employee safety rules and regulations.
- Be technologically savvy and have a demonstrated record of understanding and utilizing technology systems and procedures. Possess proficiency in MS Word and Excel, the ability to navigate GIS and GPS systems, and have a working knowledge of SCADA systems.
- Have successful experience in collaborating and interacting with intergovernmental agencies: experience with external organizations in a constructive and cooperative manner, while representing the Agency's interests tactfully and firmly.
- A demonstrated ability to provide strategic leadership to ensure a continued focus on the Agencies goals and objectives offering alternatives, considering risk and opportunity while focused on providing the best service to member municipalities.
- Have the ability to make effective public presentations. Be able to present complex technical information to any audience in a manner that is understandable.
- Have proven verbal and written communication skills, both one-on-one and in public speaking venues, treating everyone in a professional and respectful manner. Possess excellent writing skills.



IDEAL CANDIDATE

- Have a track record of assessing the skills and abilities of existing personnel to maximize their talents and expertise, including opportunities for employees to take on new challenges and “stretch” as professionals.
- A progressive mindset and a strong desire to work in and motivate team members within a collegial, team-oriented environment that is committed to public service. Must be a highly motivated, self-starting and confident individual with excellent interpersonal skills.
- The maturity, self-confidence, and strength of professional conviction to provide administrative insights and administrative counsel to the Executive Committee, and Board of Directors; be able to firmly and diplomatically present professional views, the “good and bad” and carry out administrative decisions in a timely, professional, and impartial manner.
- A demonstrated track record of seeking best practices, known as a “self-starter,” and comfortable in working with limited direction and with latitude of action while keeping the Executive Committee appropriately informed.
- An enthusiastic, positive, open, self-confident individual who is genuinely supportive of the goals and mission of JAWA.
- An approachable, patient management style; be a “people person” who is accessible to the Executive Committee, Board members, and employees; be sincerely empathetic with the ability to understand multiple perspectives.
- Exceptional leadership acumen, understanding when it is critical to exercise leadership and when to be flexible and adaptable to new ideas.
- A track record of creativity in solving problems, encouraging, and empowering employees to find new and better ways to get work done, while also applying, maintaining and respecting the regulatory framework that guides the delivery of the Agency’s services.
- High energy level and enthusiasm for meeting the challenges and responsibilities of the Executive Director’s position; be a model for a good work ethic and demonstrate an ability to work and interact openly and effectively with all.
- A commitment to the well-being of the staff, be a positive and flexible team builder who works with staff to identify Agency needs and find solutions which meet those challenges. Be someone who can make difficult decisions and stand behind those decisions.
- A clear and concise communicator, both orally and in writing. Have an open, friendly personality and communication style and a calm demeanor; be one who can establish trust quickly with others. Have a sense of humor when appropriate to the circumstances.

COMPENSATION

Starting salary range of \$195,000 to \$235,000 +/- DOQ. The Agency is an IMRF employer. The Executive Director will generally be available to respond to inquiries of staff and Executive Committee during regular business hours.



HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by April 15, 2022 with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to www.govhrusa.com/career_center/ to the attention of:

Kathleen (Katy) Rush,
Vice President, GovHR USA,
650 Dundee Road, #270, Northbrook, IL 60062.
Tel: 847-380-3240.